

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

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E.O. 11652:N/A - DECONTROL ON RECEIPT

TAGS: EWWT, BEXP, MA

SUBJECT: CONDITIONS IN TAMATAVE PORT

1. SUMMARY: ECON/COMMERCIAL OFFICER VISITED PORT OF TAMATAVE, JULY 25. TAMATAVE IS THE ONLY PORT IN MADAGASCAR THAT CAN RECEIVE LARGE VESSELS ALONGSIDE. WHILE IT CAN BERTH 4 OR 5 LARGE VESSELS AT ONE TIME, SHORTAGES OF FORKLIFT TRUCKS AND OTHER CARGO HANDLING FACILITIES CAUSE LONG DELAYS AND TURN-AROUND TIMES. FROM VISIT AND DISCUSSIONS WITH PORT OFFICIALS AND OTHERS CAME THE FOLLOWING DETAILS AND IMPRESSIONS. END SUMMARY.

2. TAMATAVE PORT HAS ALONGSIDE BERTHING FOR FOUR OR FIVE LARGE BREAK-BULK VESSELS. THE NEWEST SECTION OF THE PORT CAN HANDLE THREE VESSELS, WITH DEPTHS ALONGSIDE OF 12, 11, AND 10 METERS. TWO MORE BERTHS HAVE DEPTHS ALONGSIDE OF 9 AND 8 1/2 METERS. TWO OTHER BERTHS, NORMALLY USED BY COASTERS, HAVE DEPTHS OF 6 AND 5 METERS. THUS, IN PRINCIPAL, THE PORT SHOULD BE ABLE TO HANDLE FOUR OR FIVE LARGE BREAK-BULK VESSELS AND TWO OR THREE COASTERS AT ANY ONE TIME. HOWEVER, PORT OFFICIALS ADMIT THAT PORT'S FORKLIFT TRUCKS ARE NOT SUFFICIENT TO HANDLE THIS NUMBER OF VESSELS EXPEDITIOUSLY.

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THE PORT HAS 37 FORKLIFT TRUCKS, BUT ONLY 21 OF THESE ARE CURRENTLY IN OPERATION. THE PORT HAS RECEIVED, BY AIRFREIGHT, SPARE PARTS TO PUT 12 MORE IN OPERATION IN THE NEXT FEW WEEKS. ANOTHER FORKLIFT WILL BE PROVIDED WITHIN THE NEXT FEW MONTHS BY AN IBRD LOAN, AND THE PORT HOPES, PRESUMABLY FROM ITS OWN FUNDS, TO OBTAIN 10 MORE FORKLIFTS, HOPEFULLY IN EARLY 1978. EMBASSY HAS ALERTED SOCIETE HENRI FRAISE & CIE., THE

WELL-ESTABLISHED LOCAL DISTRIBUTOR FOR HYSTER FORKLIFTS TO THE TRADE OPPORTUNITY.

3. ECONOFF AND PORT DIRECTOR-GENERAL DISCUSSED SAD FACT THAT NO US FLAG VESSELS HAVE CALLED ON TAMATAVE FOR SEVERAL YEARS. DIRECTOR GENERAL SEEMS TO UNDERSTAND THAT PRIMARY REASONS FOR THIS ARE LACK OF CARGO AND DELAYS IN PORT. DIRECTOR GENERAL BELIEVES THAT WITH REPAIR OF 12 FORKLIFTS AND PURCHASE OF 10 NEW FORKLIFTS, PORT WILL BE ABLE TO OFFER ACCEPTABLE TURN-AROUND TIMES. HOWEVER, KNOWLEDGEABLE LOCAL SOURCE IS UNDER IMPRESSION THAT EVEN AFTER IMPROVING ITS EQUIPMENT, GOVERNMENT-OPERATED PORT WILL BE UNABLE TO OFFER ADEQUATE TURN-AROUND TIME. SOURCE SAID THAT PRESENTLY IT TAKES UP TO 8 DAYS FOR A VESSEL TO DISCHARGE AND TAKE ON 500 TONS OF CARGO. HE DOES NOT BELIEVE THAT EQUIPMENT IMPROVEMENTS WILL REDUCE THIS TIME TO THE ONE-AND-A-HALF OR TWO DAYS SUCH OPERATIONS NORMALLY TAKE IN EFFICIENT PORTS. SOURCE GAVE EXAMPLE OF VESSEL THEN IN PORT (BELLE ROSE) WHICH HAD BROUGHT APPROXIMATELY 7500 TONS OF MERCHANDISE TO MADAGASCAR, HAD BEEN IN PORT FOR TWO WEEKS AND IS EXPECTED TO BE THERE FOR ANOTHER TWO WEEKS. WE ARE NOT AWARE OF WHAT WAITING TIMES HAVE BEEN EXPERIENCED BY THE CONFERENCE LINERS PROVIDING REGULAR SERVICES FROM FRENCH PORTS, BUT THESE FIRMS, ASSOCIATED IN ONE WAY OR ANOTHER WITH THE MADAGASCAR GOVERNMENT (WHICH HAS PART OWNERSHIP IN SOME OF THE LINES) AND WITH THE MAJOR SHIPPING AGENT AND FREIGHT FORWARDERS, AUXIMAD, ARE PRESUMABLY LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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GIVEN BEST POSSIBLE SERVICE. EVEN SO, SOME OF THESE VESSELS HAD TO BYPASS TAMATAVE RECENTLY AND OFFLOAD IN MAJUNGA BECAUSE THE TAMATAVE PORT WAS ACCEPTING ONLY VESSELS WITH CRUCIAL RICE IMPORTS.

4. DURING TOUR OF THE PORT, ECONOFF SAW SEVERAL WAREHOUSES WHICH APPEARED TO BE WELL MANAGED. HOWEVER THE GOVERNMENT IS USING THESE PORT WAREHOUSES AS STORAGE FACILITIES FOR RICE. ECONOFF SAW APPROXIMATELY 10,000 TONS OF CHINESE & PAKISTANI RICE IN ONE WAREHOUSE, SOME OF WHICH HAD ARRIVED ONE OR TWO MONTHS BEFORE. ANOTHER WAREHOUSE WAS SAID TO CONTAIN A LIKE AMOUNT OF RICE.

5. ACTION REQUESTED: DEPARTMENT PLEASE COMMUNICATE INFORMATION PARA 2 & 3 ABOVE TO MOORE MCCORMACK, LYKES & FARRELL AND INFORM THEM OF THE EMBASSY'S VIEW THAT FOR THE NEXT SEVERAL MONTHS TAMATAVE WILL PROBABLY BE UNABLE TO OFFER ADEQUATE TURN-AROUND TIMES TO THESE US FLAG CARRIERS. BARRETT

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